V E T A C

Virginia Educational Technology Advisory Committee

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Virginia Educational Technology Advisory Committee
2006–07 Annual Report
Submitted by John W. Littlefield, VETAC Chair

The Virginia Educational Technology Advisory Committee (VETAC) continued to fulfill its mission during the 2006–07 school year, advising the state Board of Education—through the Superintendent of Public Instruction—on educational technology matters. VETAC's role includes, but is not limited to, providing information and recommendations to local school divisions and the Department of Education on technology policy and funding-related issues.

VETAC's membership consists of a broad constituency of technology stakeholders from the public and private sectors. VETAC members include teachers, principals, superintendents, curriculum specialists, educational technology program directors and coordinators, higher education administrators, educational professional organizations, school board members, and members of the business community. Each member serves as an advocate for educational technology and acts as a conduit for communicating educational technology-related issues between VETAC and the member's host organization or affiliate.

During the 2006–07 school year, VETAC participated in work sessions on data quality and collaboration between higher education and K-12. In addition to the work sessions, the full committee participated in presentations from the Naval Research–Science & Technology for America's Readiness (N-STAR) group, Virginia Alliance for Secure Computing and Networking (VA SCAN), Department of Education, and instructional technology resource teachers (ITRT). Lan Neugent of the Virginia Department of Education gave several legislative updates to the committee throughout the year. The information collected during these sessions will be used by the department and the affiliated groups.

Meeting Summaries

October 3, 2006, at the Virginia Department of Education, VETAC discussed several topics and conducted a work session on data quality.

Dr. Tammy McGraw of the Virginia Department of Education presented *Guidelines and Resources for Internet Safety in Schools*. This document provides guidance on Internet safety for Virginia schools. The print version of the guidelines is available on the Web along with a Superintendent's Memo on the publication. The department's Web site provides an overview of the legislation and the required components of Internet safety required for all Virginia schools.

Greg Weisiger of the Virginia Department of Education shared a summary of E-Rate, a federal program that provides technology infrastructure discounts to school divisions based on location and relative poverty. Virginia has been successful with a 98% E-Rate participation rate.

Dave Mirra of Stafford County Schools introduced Bob Stiegler, who shared an overview of the N-STAR Program. Stafford County School District ITRT were trained by Dahlgren engineers and worked on the N-STAR curriculum. The project allows students to solve real-world problems by building and programming LEGO MINDSTORMS robots to locate and remove land mines for humanitarian purposes. A subsequent iteration of the program has featured oil spill cleanups. The purpose of the work is to entice students to pursue studies and careers in mathematics, technology, engineering, and science. N-STAR is a push-in program—involving all students—that by requirement necessitates problem-based learning, meets state Standards of Learning (SOL), and serves students at all instructional levels in Stafford's seventh grade.

Bethann Canada of the Virginia Department of Education and John Littlefield led VETAC through a question-and-answer session on data collection/quality. This discussion prepared the group for a work session on data quality. The committee was divided into several groups that discussed different aspects of data quality. Each group then role-played the aspect of data quality it had discussed. This created an energetic and engaging view of data quality. The publication *Forum Guide to Building a Culture of Quality Data* from the National Forum on Education Statistics was shared with each member of the committee.

February 13, 2007, at Hanover High School, Hanover, Virginia, VETAC discussed several topics and also conducted a work session on connections between higher education and K-12 programs.

Lan Neugent of the Virginia Department of Education shared a legislative update on various items that can potentially impact technology funding. The bond money for the Web-based SOL Technology Initiative is expected to continue at least until 2009, which is when all high, middle, and elementary schools are expected to be ready for online testing. Triand software will supplement the EIMS capabilities for data needed by schools.

Ena Wood, an ITRT with Arlington Public Schools, shared a presentation that included a statewide survey of demographics, number of positions and vacancies at each division, and position variations across the state. She covered at length the current and emerging role of ITRT and reviewed the state and federal legislation initiatives that support these positions.

Zahrl G. Schoeny of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia prepared the questions to be addressed during the work session on connections between higher education and K-12 programs. The committee broke into small discussion groups and discussed the questions that he prepared. Each group summarized its discussion to the whole group and e-mailed the information to Mr. Schoeny to prepare a summary.

May 1, 2007, at Advanced Technology Center, Virginia Beach, Virginia, VETAC discussed several topics.

Cheryl Elliott shared an overview of VA SCAN, which was created to address security issues in higher education. The organization has opened its membership to K-12. Virginia Beach Public Schools and Suffolk Public Schools are currently members. VA SCAN has a Web site with many security-related resources that can be utilized by K-12 schools. VA SCAN also makes security-related courses available at reduced costs to K-12.

Cathy Cheely of the Virginia Department of Education gave an update on Virtual Virginia. This online learning environment has been very successful for Advanced Placement courses. Almost every division in Virginia is participating with more than 3,500 students enrolled throughout the state.

Tammy McGraw of the Virginia Department of Education reviewed the architectural guidelines for technology, based on a draft outline of the network, hardware, and software. The information collected during this discussion will be used for the guidance document being drafted by the department.

Ramesh Kapoor of Virginia Beach Public Schools shared a recent procurement for network security products. This school division has contracted with two vendors to provide content filtering and e-mail filtering. He gave an overview of this solution and shared some of the main components of the contract.

VETAC members also had an opportunity to tour Landstown High School and the Advanced Technology Center.